**Formative and Summative Assessment**

**Formative Assessment**

Formative assessment is utilized to immediately determine whether students have learned what the instructor intended.  This type of assessment is intended to help instructors identify material which needs to be clarified or re-taught and should not be used to evaluate or grade students.  Results of formative assessment can assist instructors to ascertain whether curriculum or learning activities need to be modified during a class session or before the next class meets.

**Summative Assessment**

Summative assessment is cumulative in nature and is utilized to determine whether students have met the course goals or student learning outcomes at the end of a course or program.

University of Texas

### Formative and summative

Assessment is often divided into formative and summative categories for the purpose of considering different objectives for assessment practices.

* [Summative assessment](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Summative_assessment) - Summative assessment is generally carried out at the end of a course or project. In an educational setting, summative assessments are typically used to assign students a course grade.
* [Formative assessment](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Formative_assessment) - Formative assessment is generally carried out throughout a course or project. Formative assessment, also referred to as "educative assessment," is used to aid learning. In an educational setting, formative assessment might be a teacher (or [peer](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peer_group)) or the learner, providing feedback on a student's work, and would not necessarily be used for grading purposes.

Educational researcher [Robert Stake](http://www.ed.uiuc.edu/circe/Robert_Stake.html) explains the difference between formative and summative assessment with the following analogy:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **“** | When the cook tastes the soup, that's formative. When the guests taste the soup, that's summative.[[4]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Assessment#cite_note-Stake_in_Scriven-3) | **”** |

Summative and formative assessment are often referred to in a learning context as *assessment of learning* and *assessment for learning* respectively

Wikipedia

The word ‘assess’ comes from the Latin verb ‘assidere’ meaning ‘to sit with’.

In assessment one is supposed to sit with the learner. This implies it is something we do ‘with’ and ‘for’ students and not ‘to’ students (Green, 1999).

* Formative and summative assessment are *interconnected*. They seldom stand alone in construction or effect.
* The vast majority of genuine formative assessment is informal, with interactive and timely feedback and response.
* It is widely and empirically argued that formative assessment has the *greatest impact* on learning and achievement.

Summative Assessment ***of*** learning

* Generally taken by students at the end of a unit or semester to demonstrate the "sum" of what they have or have not learned.
* Summative assessment methods are the most traditional way of evaluating student work.
* "Good summative assessments--tests and other graded evaluations--must be demonstrably **reliable**, **valid**, and **free of bias**" (Angelo and Cross, 1993).

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